

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

Subregion: SOUTH CENTRAL **County:** CALAVERAS

Applicant: PACIFIC FOREST TRUST

Project Title: LOVE CREEK WORKING FOREST PROJECT PHASE II

Reference Number: SNC 070301

PROJECT SCOPE

The Pacific Forest Trust will undertake preliminary actions toward the acquisition of a conservation easement on a 300-acre property in Calaveras County. Actions to be taken include:

- Project planning, development, and management;
- Negotiations and legal review;
- Appraisal of the property under consideration for conservation easement;
- Production of baseline report and monitoring plan.

The Trust will utilize significant in-kind contributions from the landowner, CA State Parks Foundation, in addition to substantial in-kind from the Trust itself. These in-kind items will be applied to preliminary title reports, escrow fees, title insurance, closing costs, project management, and a portion of the appraisal to be conducted on the site.

The main in-kind component will be a below-market sale of the easement by the landowner, valued at \$800,000.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Completion of preliminary title reports	July 2008
Completion of easement negotiations	August 2008
Complete and submit six-month progress report to SNC	September 2008
Completion of legal review	December 2008
Conduct and complete appraisal for the property	March 2009
Complete and submit 12-month progress report to SNC	March 2009
Produce and make available baseline report	June 2009
Produce and make available monitoring plan	August 2009
Final Report/Final Payment Request	October 2009

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Project planning, development, and maintenance	\$ 20,000
Easement negotiations and legal review	\$ 20,000
Appraisal Services	\$ 15,000
Production of baseline report and monitoring plan	\$ 20,000
GRAND TOTAL	\$75,000

Letters of Support:

None Submitted

Recommendation:

Recommend funding at requested amount of \$75,000.

2. Project Summary

The 300-acre Alford working forest property is located in Calaveras County, CA just outside the historic town of Arnold. The property is adjacent to the Stanislaus National Forest and is 2.5 miles from the Big Trees State Park. The property consists of Sierran Mixed Conifer forestland, including a stand of old-growth sugar pines, and lies within the Love Creek Watershed, a major tributary to the North Fork of the Stanislaus River.

Sharing multiple boundaries with the Stanislaus National Forest, the property creates a scenic and ecological buffer for popular public lands. Nearly 1.5 miles of the main stem of Love Creek runs through the center of the property and flows into the North Fork of the Stanislaus River, a proposed Wild and Scenic River, and eventually into the Calaveras County water supply. The Alford property provides a diversity of wildlife habitat including: Sierran Mixed conifer forest, wet meadow, and montane riparian, which provide habitat for a number of rare and threatened species.

In the last decade, people seeking recreational amenities, open space, and rural historical character have spurred residential and second home development in Calaveras County, creating major changes in the County's land use patterns and rapid growth of subdivisions in the Love Creek Watershed where the Alford property is located. These subdivisions threaten water quality in tributaries to the North Fork of the Stanislaus River, existing wildlife habitat and corridors, and the historical working forest landscape. The acquisition of a permanent conservation easement on the Alford working forest property will address the threats to water quality and wildlife habitat through its restrictions, which will dedicate the property to relatively natural forest and meadow habitats and its traditional use of forestry.

The conservation easement on the Alford working forest property is the second phase in a larger conservation effort to protect approximately 1,200 acres of neighboring forestlands. This larger conservation effort seeks to create a corridor of protected private working forests that will act as a buffer between the subdivisions off of Highway 4 and the relatively wild landscape of Big Trees State Park and the Stanislaus National Forest. This corridor will maintain a working forest land-base in this part of the County; it will protect a majority of the Love Creek Watershed; and create a North-South wildlife migration corridor. The successful acquisition of a conservation easement on the Alford property will add to the protection being completed in Phase I of the Love Creek Working Forest Conservation Project this year and will further protect the wildlife habitat corridor between public and private lands, provide additional protection to the Love Creek Watershed, and serve as a model for additional landowners in the Watershed who want to permanently protect their properties. The Pacific Forest Trust respectfully requests \$75,000 from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy in order to cover the costs associated with project planning and management, appraisal services, easement negotiations, and baseline/monitoring report development. The Conservancy's grant funds would be leveraged by nearly \$821,000 of in-kind and monetary match from the landowner and other public and private partners.